

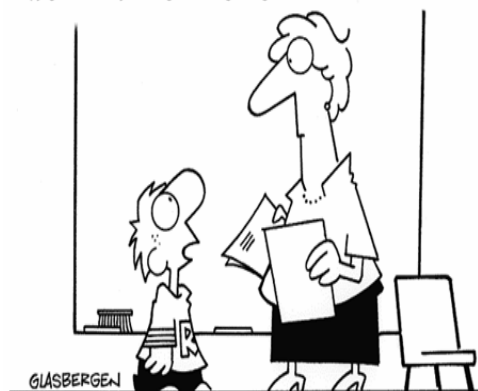
# Take the Worksheet Out of Homework



MaTHink Conference  
March 2012  
Elaine Woolsey, MVUSD  
[ewoolsey@mvusd.net](mailto:ewoolsey@mvusd.net)

**Homework is like chores—it's a traditional activity that most students hate to do. Since the 1950s, when pressure from the Cold War prompted legislators and school officials to make homework a mainstay in the education system, students take a multitude of books and papers home to complete assignments after the school day ends.**

Copyright 1997 Randy Glasbergen. [www.glasbergen.com](http://www.glasbergen.com)



**"I couldn't do my homework because my computer has a virus and so do all my pencils and pens."**

# The Pros of Homework:



1. Practice Makes Perfect
  - On standardized testing, homework completing middle school scholars outperform homework non-completers by 35%
  - A typical homework-completing high school scholar will outperform students who do not do homework by 69% on standardized tests
  - There seems to be no significant difference in scores in elementary school (Reese, 1997)

## The Pros of Homework:

Harris Cooper (1994) presents immediate and long-term effects of homework:

Immediate: better understanding and retention of material; critical thinking and concept formation increased; curriculum is enriched.

Long-term Academic: learning is encouraged during leisure time so that attitude towards school is improved and study habits and skills increased.

Long-term Non-Academic: greater self-direction and self-discipline; time management

# **The Cons of Homework**

- Research indicates homework assignments in the early years of elementary as having very little value (Butler 2000)
- “Traditional Doggy Bag Assignments” are detrimental and ineffective (Brown 2000)
- Too much time needed for homework limits on leisure/community activities, parental interference, and temptation to get it done (Cooper 2000)



## **The Cons of Homework:**

- Many students find homework to be tedious and boring, so they don't try as hard, which in turn affects their in-class performance (“The Case Against Homework”)
- Too much homework can demoralize students and lead to lower test scores. In countries where less homework is assigned, such as Japan and Denmark, students score better on tests than students from countries that assign a lot of homework (“National Differences, Global Similarities: World Culture and the Future of Schooling”)

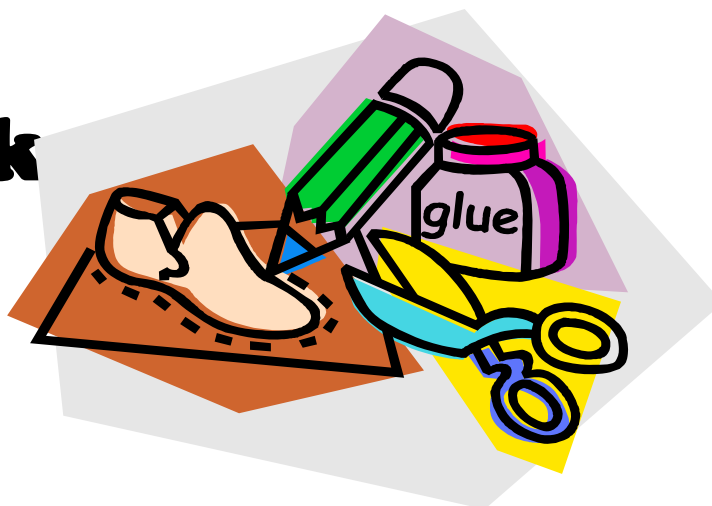
# The Reality...

There are over nine-million high-risk children in America, seventy-five percent of whom are minorities. How do we serve their needs in terms of homework?

Assignments at all grade levels should be given that truly extend the cognitively-rich work the student experiences in the classroom.



## Alternatives to Math Homework



Project-based learning can be used as a motivational tool to get students excited about doing homework.



## What Does Project-Based Homework Offer for Students?

- More Choice
- Greater Autonomy in “how to” approach
- Opportunity for creativity
- Instant Differentiation
- Student-paced

